

Battle Creek VA Medical Center Vocational Rehabilitation Services Fact Sheet

Vocational Rehabilitation Mission:

To foster recovery for Veterans living with mental health illness or physical impairment with barriers to employment, who want to secure and maintain meaningful community-based competitive employment by empowering self-esteem, dignity, respect, and independence through high-quality vocational rehabilitation services.

1. Population(s) served:

Vocational Rehabilitation is offered to all Veterans eligible for VA Health Care. The program serves Veterans living with mental illness or physical impairment with barriers to employment and want to secure and maintain meaningful community-based competitive employment. VHA Vocational Rehabilitation is intended for Veterans with mental illness, substance use disorders, homelessness, criminal justice involvement, physical disabilities, and other disabilities contributing to occupational barriers.

2. Settings:

- a) **Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)** under this umbrella offering Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) and Vocational Assistance.
- b) **Compensated Work Therapy (CWT)** is a subdivision of VRS composed of different sections, and specifically caters to each Veteran's employment needs. Transitional Work (TW) assignments, Supportive Employment (SE), and Community Based Employed Services (CBES) are offered in Battle Creek and Wyoming (CBOC) and within a 45-mile catchment area of the facilities. Supported Employment (SE) and Community Based Employment Services (CBES) is offered at the Muskegon CBOC and within a 45-mile catchment area of the facility as needed. In addition, the program offers Vocational Assistance to Veterans looking for help with Supported Self-employment and Supported Education interests.

3. Program Service Contact Info:

Compensated Work Therapy CWT

Transitional Work TW

Battle Creek Location

(269) 966- 5600 ext. 31821, ext. 31832

Grand Rapids location:

(269) 966-5600 ext.39213, ext.39214

Supported Employment and Community Based Employment Services

Battle Creek location:

(269) 966-5600 ext. 36335

Supported Employment and Community Based Employment Services

Grand Rapids location:

(269) 966-5600 ext. 39213, ext.39214

Supported Employment and Community Based Employment Services

Battle Creek VA Medical Center Vocational Rehabilitation Services Fact Sheet

Page | 2

Lansing location:

(269) 966-5600 ext. 39213, ext.39214

Vocational Assistance

Provided at all locations please use above ext. numbers for services

Program Hours of Operation:

Monday- Friday

8 am to 4 pm

Closed on weekends and all Federal Holidays

Vocational Rehabilitation Staff make every effort to be available to help avoid crisis but are not available 24 hours a day.

DIAL 911 FOR AN EMERGENCY

If you are having a medical and mental health emergency, please call 911

IF NEEDING URGENT CARE OR SUPPORT

You may:

- Seek assistance in Urgent Care at the Battle Creek VA Medical Center,
- Call the after-hours Telephone Triage RN at (888) 214-1247, ext. 35053,
- Go to your nearest in-network community urgent care or hospital emergency room, or
- Call the Veteran's Crisis Line.

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available.

4. Frequency of services:

CWT-Transitional Work (TW) program is an individualized, month-to-month program with a duration of up to 4 months for VA assignments and 6 months for community assignments and based on the Veterans competitive employment needs.

Vocational Assistance, Community Based Employment Services (CBES), Supported Employment (SE), Supported Education, and Supported Self-Employment Services is offered based on the Veteran's individualized needs and self-participation preferences.

5. Payers and funding sources:

VHA staff is paid salary at GS level. Veterans attending the program are served based on their Veterans eligibility and do not incur any charges. The CWT/TW provides paid assignments, which are non-taxable, and Veterans earn minimum wages. Other programs offered, Supported Employment SE, Community Based Employment Services CBES, Supported Education/ and Self-employment. Supportive services do not incur any funding responsibilities and is part of the medical center supportive services for eligible Veterans. Additionally, Veterans needing additional funding for vocational retraining are referred to community providers offering additional supportive services not

Battle Creek VA Medical Center Vocational Rehabilitation Services Fact Sheet

Page | 3

offered under the VHA service. Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), local colleges, other vocational retraining, and Volunteers of America (VOA) are some of the options currently available.

6. Fees:

No fees are incurred to any Veteran attending the program. Veterans registered with the Veterans Health (VHA) Administration are eligible for services.

7. Referral sources:

Veterans enter the program primarily through a provider consult; however, walk-in, and community referrals are welcomed and encouraged. In general Veterans needing vocational assistance or one-time meeting are welcomed.

8. The specific services offered, including whether the services are provided directly, by contract, or by referral.

CWT/ VA (Vocational Assistance) offers limited vocational counseling and guidance and community resources utilized for job search services. Offering minimal individualized assistance to assist Veterans to return to competitive employment. Veterans dictate the level of care and supportive services needed.

CWT/ TW (Transitional Work) offers vocational counseling and guidance, and clinical services provided in actual work settings to assist Veterans to return to successful competitive employment. Veterans in the TW program are provided assignments corresponding to actual employment settings to match each Veterans employment skills and experiences.

CWT/ SE (Supported Employment) is an evidence-based model that assists Veterans living with severe mental illness (SMI) or a physical disability find and maintain competitive employment. SE serves 75% of Veterans with a psychosis diagnosis. Individualized treatment is highly integrated within the Veteran's clinical treatment team.

CWT/ CBES (Community Based Employment Services) primary goal is developing community based competitive employment by the Veterans Health Administration TSES to support the Veterans' competitive employment in the community. CBES is provided to Veterans with a history of sporadic employment, difficulty maintaining employment, initiating, and following through on a job search or desire immediate competitive employment.

CWT/ SEd (Supported Education) provides individualized support for Veterans involved in formal educational training programs. SEd offers a link to educational facilities providing a supportive and accommodating environment for Veterans receiving vocational rehabilitation and education opportunities.

Typically, services are provided directly to the Veterans with some exceptions for Veterans needing addition support. This is included but is not limited to Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Volunteers of America (VOA). These additional services are free to the Veterans. Additional referrals to other community partners are provided at the request and approval of the Veteran.

Scope of Services

1. The persons served:

Vocational Rehabilitation provides Veterans with the vocational and clinical services in actual work settings needed to gain work experience and work resilience to prepare for community-based competitive employment. The goal of Vocational Rehabilitation is to provide the supports and resources needed for a Veteran to successfully transition to competitive employment.

Vocational Rehabilitation assists veterans in developing goals and behaviors towards gaining competitive employment, training, or schooling. While participating in the program you can expect to engage in activities to develop and improve work quality, production skills, and stamina, attitude, enhanced motivation, and heightened self-esteem. Vocational Rehabilitation works to create a realistic, non-institutional work environment, conducive to development of work tolerance and positive work habits. The program allows veterans to establish recovery, stability, and continuity in their care. Each case is treated individually dependent on the barriers and goals of the Veteran; therefore, treatment may vary from Veteran to Veteran, including length of participation in the program and work assignments.

2. Families/support systems, in accordance with the choices of the persons served:

Veterans are encouraged to include their current support system/families/partners as part of their individualized plan of employment. As the Veterans develop their individualized treatment plan, a separate component is specifically dedicated to the family supportive system. The Veterans decides whether to include their support system.

3. Referral sources:

Veterans interested in services from the Vocational Rehabilitation program will need a referrals/consults from Primary Care or mental health provider for Vocational Evaluation/Assistance. Once consult is received, the Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists/Counselor will meet with veteran and determine what area of the Vocational Rehabilitation program is more appropriate to address the Veteran's barriers & goals for optimal success. After a comprehensive assessment, additional referrals may be warrant to other services who can more comprehensively achieve the Veteran's goals. Referrals to programs come from outpatient and inpatient sources.

Veteran will require medical approval to participate in the program or return to the program if they become hospitalized, injured and/or medical problems arise. This will be determined by the assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist (VRS).

4. Payers and funding sources:

The budget is provided through the federally allocating funding process and approved by the congress. All Veterans are eligible by meeting the criterial of time in services eligibility (two years of minimum active services starting 1980) and being honorably discharged. Each VA has an allocated fiscal budget and each department is assigned enough monetary assistance to cover their respected fiduciary obligations. Veterans' income viability is accordantly to each Veteran's financial and Recovery needs. However, competitive employment and financial independence is the main goals of all of the programs. This is a therapeutic based program aiming at providing continue supportive services to help Veterans overcome their employment barriers. Veterans with Services Connected benefits are eligible for additional educational/employment and supportive services. This program is managed by the Veteran

Readiness & Employment VR&E program. VR&E benefits can be found the VA benefits website. You can schedule an appointment with a counselor by accessing the website.

<https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/>

Community assignments partnerships compensate Veterans attending those programs at a minimum wage or higher. These assignments are managed by the program and proceeds are placed on a CWT account to be used for the benefit of Veterans attending the program. CWT/TW assignments budget is managed by program manager and funds is used for payroll and program supportive internal needs. Exceeding funds at end of Fiscal Year (Sept 30-Oct. 31) are returned to VAMC VACO.

5. Other relevant stakeholders:

CWT/TW in partnership with government and community resources, has the responsibility to make available an array of services where Veterans served can choose services based on their individualized treatment plan and employment needs. It is the responsibility of Vocational Rehabilitation to continue to build strong, positive relationship with local communities and stakeholders to continue offering additional employment opportunities for the Veterans. It is the efforts of the program to create additional Transitional Work opportunities to better serve Veterans transitioning into community employers.

The program has been able to develop community assignments with some of these partners. The assignments and partnership help Veterans gain meaningful employment. The program maintains a supportive network of work settings on the BCVA Medical Center and supporting community locations. The program strives to maintain the highest level of quality and satisfaction to its stakeholders while continuing to improve the services available to the Veterans.

6. The general public:

The general public are not collaborators of the program, but information is provided/available through our office, the VA Public Affairs, and by others community partners interactions. The program uses volunteers, which regularly interacts with Veterans assigned to parts of the program. Confidentiality and discretion is provided to offer the Veterans privacy and non-disclosure of their participation in the program. Assignment supervisors understand and respects the Veteran's confidentiality needs. Assignment supervisors are not provided with any of the Veteran's health care information to protect their HIPPA rights.

DATA COLLECTION: Employment Re-Entry Services' data collection includes:

- a. Financial information
- b. Accessibility status reports (accessibility plan)
- c. Resource allocation
- d. Risk management (risk management plan)
- f. Health and safety reports
- g. Feedback from patients and other stakeholders
- h. Field trends and evidenced based and practice guidelines
- i. Service delivery

These data are used to address the needs of patients and other stakeholders and the program business needs. Comparative analysis is determined by program trends. Collectively, data are used to formulate strategic planning, performance indicators, performance targets, and program objectives.